

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 HA-02 PM-03 ACDA-10 MCE-00
TRSE-00 OMB-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 NSAE-00 NSC-05
INR-05 L-01 PA-01 SP-02 EUR-08 /063 W
-----112698 202334Z /75

P R 202225Z APR 78

FM AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0007
INFO AMCONSUL BELIZE
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MEXICO CITY
USCINCSOUTH QUARRY HTS CZ

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 GUATEMALA 2381

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, MASS, PBOR, BH, MX, UK, GT
SUBJECT: MEETING WITH PRESIDENT LAUGERUD ON F-5E'S

REF: STATE 099039

SUMMARY: PRESIDENT LAUGERUD RECEIVED TURNDOWN ON F-5'S TODAY IN BETTER HUMOR THAN I HAD EXPECTED, INDICATING TO ME THAT HE HAD SOME UNDERSTANDING OF REASONS BEHIND OUR DECISION AND ALSO SUGGESTING THAT SOME OF THE URGENCY HAD GONE OUT OF HIS REQUEST WITH THE EASING OF THE BELIZE SITUATION. THIS WAS SUBJECT, HOWEVER, TO REASSURANCE HE WOULD LIKE TO HAVE THAT CUBA WOULD NOT, AS HE HAD JUST HEARD, BE INVITED TO STATION FORCES IN BELIZE. PRESIDENT APSO EXPRESSED CONCERN -- WHICH I TRIED TO ALLAY -- ABOUT EFFECT IN GUATEMALA IF MEXICO WERE TO RECEIVE F-5'S FOLLOWING REJECTION OF GUATEMALAN REQUEST. ALSO, IF WE WERE NOT WILLING TO UPSET CURRENT BALANCE IN REGION BY INTRODUCING F-5'S, HE WOULD PIKE TO EXPLORE POSSIBILITY OF ACQUIRING ANOTHER U.S. AIRCRAFT, FOR EXAMPLE THE F-100, WHICH WOULD NOT UPSET THIS BALANCE BUT

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WOULD STILL GO SOME DISTANCE TOWARD MEETING GUATEMALAN REQUIREMENTS. END SUMMARY.

I CALLED ON PRESIDENT LAUGERUD TODAY TO INFORM HIM THAT WE WOULD BE UNABLE TO MEET HIS REQUEST FOR F-5E'S, DRAWING ON ALL POINTS IN REFTEL. HE EXPRESSED DISAPPOINTMENT, REFERRING TO UNEASINESS THAT THIS WOULD CAUSE SAMONG HIS MILITARY PEOPLE

WHO IN PAST HAD COME TO DEPEND ON CLOSE RELATIONS WITH US, BUT WENT ON TO INDICATE SOME UNDERSTANDING OF POLICY REASONS WHICH HAD LED TO OUR DECISION AND LSO TO NOTE THAT THE ACQUISITION OF THE F-5'S DID NOT LOOM QUITE SO SERIOUSLY FOR HIM NOW AS IT HAD AT THE TIME HE HAD MADE HIS REQUEST SINCE THE POSSIBILITY OF A SERIOUS CONFRONTATION WITH BRITAIN OVER BELIZE HAD RECEDED. HE HAD NEVER BEEN WILDLY ENTHUSIASTIC, HE SAID, ABOUT SPENDING \$30 MILLION ON F-5'S WHEN HIS COUNTRY WAS SO BADLY IN NEED OF OTHER THINGS SUCH AS HOSPITALS.

2. NEVERTHELESS, HE SAID, THIS DEPENDED ON WHETHER THE MEXICANS WERE ALSO BEING TURNED DOWN ON F-5'S; IT WOULD BE VERY BAD IF GUATEMALA WERE BEING TURNED DOWN BUT MEXICO WERE TO RECEIVE THE PLANES. I TOLD HIM IT WAS MY UNDERSTANDING THAT ANY MEXICAN REQUEST FOR F-5'S WAS NO LONGER OUTSTANDING.

3. HE SAID THERE WAS ONE OTHER ISSUE WHICH COULD CHANGE HIS REACTION. NOTING THAT HE HAD FELT FOR SOME TIME THAT THE DANGER OVER BELIZE HAD RECEDED, HE SAID HE HAD BEEN ALARMED TO HAVE A REPORT FROM ONE OF THEIR AGENTS IN BELIZE THAT THERE HAD BEEN A MEETING OF CARIBBEAN STATES IN BELIZE DURING THE PAST WEEK WHICH HAD DISCUSSED PLANS FOR INTRODUCING FORCES FROM CUBA AND OTHER CARIBBEAN STATES INTO BELIZE IN CONNECTION WITH BELIZE'S INDEPENDENCE WHICH PRICE STILL WANTED TO BRING ABOUT BY JULY 1ST. IT WAS INTENDED, ACCORDING TO THIS REPORT, THAT CUBA WOULD SUPPLY MORE FORCES THAN ANYONE ELSE; COUNTRIES
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LIKE JAMAICA, BARBADOS AND GUYANA WOULD CONTRIBUTE IN A TOKEN WAY, FOR EXAMPLE, WITH FIVE POLICEMENT OR SO. HE EMPHASIZED THAT THIS WAS "NOT AN OFFICAL REPORT" BUT HE SAID HE WAS DISTURBED BY IT AS HE DID NOT WANT AN ANGOLA OR ETHIOPIA HERE. HE ASKED IF I COULD FIND OUT ABOUT SUCH A MEETING AND LET HIM KNOW THE TRUE FACTS. I SAID I WOULD TRY BUT THAT I WAS EXTREMELY SKEPTICAL ABOUT THE RELIABILITY OF SUCH A REPORT. IT WAS TRUE, AND PERHAPS RELEVANT TO THE REPORT HE HAD RECEIVED, I SAID, THAT PRICE HAD BEEN WORKING ON A PLAN FOR A MULTILATERAL SECURITY GUARANTEE WHICH WOULD IVOLVE SEVERAL OF THE COUNTRIES HE HAD MENTIONED, BUT IT WAS CNTRARY TO EVERYTHING I HAD HEARD AND ALSO TO COMMON SENSE THAT CUBA WOULD BE INVOLVED. I SAID I WOULD REPORT THIS TO DEPARTMENT, HOWEVER, AND SEEK INFORMATION I COUPD PASS TO THE PRESIDENT WHICH WOULD REASSURE HIM.

4. FINALLY, PRESIDENT SAID IT WOULD STILL BE IMPORTANT FOR GUATEMALA TO UPGRADE ITS FORCESSWHICH HAD LAGGED BEHIND THOSE OF ITS NEIGHBORS. HE UNDERSTOOD OUR POINT ABOUT NOT INTRODUCINGIA NEW, ADVANCED PLANE INTO THE REGION SO WOULD LIKE TO EXPLORE WITH US THE POSSIBILITY OF GETTING A PLANE WHICH WOULD NOT DO THIS BUT WHICH WOULD STILL LET GUATEMALA

BALANCE THE OURAGANS IN EL SALVADOR, THE SUPER MYSTERES
IN HONDURAS, AND THE F-80'S IN MEXICO. PERHAPS THESF-100
WOULD BE SUCH A PLANE, HE SAID, ADDING THAT HE WOULD HAVE SIN
MIND ACQUIRING NOT MORE THAN FIVE F-100'S WITH ONE EXTRA
TWO-SEATER FOR TRAINING. I SAID I WOULD SUBMIT THIS IDEA
TO WASHINGTON.

5. IN COURSE OF EXPAINING NEED FOR MODERNIZING HIS FORCES,
PRESIDENT MENTIONED CONTINUING THREAT FROM EGP, NOTING
THAT THERE HAD JUST BEEN A CLASH BETWEEN GOVERNMENT FORCES
AND EGP GUERRILLAS AT IXCAN NEAR THE MEXICAN BORDER,
RESULTING IN DEATH OF ONE GUERRILLA AND FLIGHT ACROSS THE BORDER
OF A COUPLE OF OTHERS. HE SAID THEY HAD CAPTURED AN AUTOMATIC
WEAPON WHICH HE ASKED AIDE TO BRING IN TO SHOW ME AND SAID
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HE WOULD BE WRITING TO ME ABOUT THIS, ENCLOSING PICTURES AND
DETAILS ABOUT THE WEAPON.

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 HA-02 PM-03 ACDA-10 MCE-00
TRSE-00 OMB-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 NSAE-00 NSC-05
INR-05 L-01 PA-01 SP-02 EUR-08 /063 W
-----112777 202337Z /75

P R 202225Z APR 78
FM AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0008
INFO AMCONSUP BELIZE
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MEXICO CITY
USCINCSOUTH QUARRY HTS CZ

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 GUATEMAPA 2381

LIMDIS

6. I CLOSED BY COMMENDING THE PRESIDENT ON HIS GOVERNMENT'S
ACTION IN PRESSING FORWARD ON THE RATIFICATION OF THE AMERICAN

HUMAN RIGHTS CONVENTION, NOW THAT CONGRESS HAD COMPLETED ITS PART OF RATIFICATION PROCESS.

7. I SHOULD NOTE PARENTHETICALLY THAT, DURING OUR DISCUSSION OF BELIZE, PRESIDENT VOLUNTEERED THAT HE HAD NOT YET BRIEFED PRESIDENT-ELECT LUCAS ON BELIZE BUT PLANNED TO DO SO SHORTLY AND HE HOPED THAT LUCAS WOULD SEE THE VIRTUE OF AN ACCOMMODATION WHICH WOULD GIVE GUATEMALA A SMALL PART OF SOUTHERN BELIZE IN THE INTEREST OF AVOIDING A SHOWDOWN WITH THE BRITISH WHICH IT WAS IN EVERYONE'S INTEREST TO AVOID. HE COMPLAINED IN THIS CONTEXT THAT BRITISH HAD SHOWN LITTLE INTEREST IN CONTINUING BELIZE NEGOTIATIONS WHICH HAD LOOKED SO PROMISINGA SHORT TIME AGO.

8. ACTIONS REQUESTED: (1) PLEASE ADVISE WHAT I CAN TELL PRESIDENT IN RESPONSE TO HIS REQUEST FOR ANY INFORMATION THAT WILL SHED LIGHT ON REPORT OF MEETING
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CARIBBEAN STATES IN BELIZE WITHIN PAST FEW DAYS AND POSSIBILITY OF STATIONING OF CUBAN OR OTHER FORCES IN BELIZE. (2) WE WILL ALSO NEED TO RESPOND, IN DUE COURSE, TO PRESIDENT'S REQUEST THAT WE CONSIDER PROVIDING ANOTHER PLANE, POSSIBLY THE F-100, TO SUBSTITUTE FOR THE F-5 AT A LOWER LEVEL OF COMBAT CAPABILITY. THE SAME REASONS WHICH LED EMBASSY TO SUPPORT THE REQUEST FOR F-5'S WOULD APPLY AS WELL TO THE F-100 OR OTHER COMPARABLE AIRCRAFT, AND I HOPE THAT PRESIDENT'S SUGGESTION OVERCOMING ONE OF OUR MAIN OBJECTIONS TO SALE OF F-5'S WILL NOW MAKE IT POSSIBLE FOR US TO MEET HIM HALF-WAY.
BOSTER

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptoning: Z
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: FIGHTER AIRCRAFT, POLICIES, MEETINGS, MILITARY SALES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 20 apr 1978
Decaption Date: 20 Mar 2014
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978GUATEM02381
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780170-0024
Format: TEL
From: GUATEMALA
Handling Restrictions:
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780436/aaaabeej.tel
Line Count: 204
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 7b6d79aa-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: LIMDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: LIMDIS
Reference: 78 STATE 99039
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 23 jun 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2906253
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: MEETING WITH PRESIDENT LAUGERUD ON F-5E'S
TAGS: PFOR, MASS, PBOR, BH, MX, UK, GT
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkvgwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/7b6d79aa-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014